

Arlington Skydiver Dies As Her Parachutes Fail

CPYRGHT

Federal Aviation Agency officials were investigating today the death of a 23-year-old Arlington woman after her parachutes failed to open completely during a skydivers' meet in Caroline County, Md., yesterday.

State police said Miss Sarah F. Thompson fell into a wooded area near the Pelican Skydiving Club, 2 miles north of Ridgeley, Md. About 600 spectators stood below.

Miss Thompson, who lived at 2791 Washington Blvd., had jumped from about 4,000 feet in a meet sponsored by the Central Atlantic Sport Parachuting Association. Police said. About 77 jumpers were in the meet.

Witnesses told police the young woman's main chute came out of its pack, but failed to open and then at about 1,200 feet her emergency chute also failed.

She fell about one-quarter of a mile southwest of the club into a

wooded area about 1:30 p.m. The county medical examiner pronounced her dead of multiple injuries at Easton Memorial Hospital.

Cesar Aguilar, safety officer for the club, said all jumpers packed their own chutes. Miss Thompson was taking her first jump of three for the meet, he said.

Aguilar said that, according to her log book, yesterday's jump was her 21st since she started skydiving in April. She jumped with the St. Michael's Angels in Midlands, Va., he said.

The safety officer said he will meet with FAA investigators at the jumping field today. The meet was an accuracy tournament, he said, with jumpers aiming for a mark.

Miss Thompson, who worked for the Central Intelligence Agency, was from Memphis, Tenn., where her parents live, police said. ✓